

The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health Program Responds to Terrorism

Anthrax (Bacillus anthracis)

New Jersey was significantly impacted by the bioterrorist attack in the fall of 2001. Four letters containing anthrax passed through postal facilities in New Jersey. The letters caused contamination that resulted in four cases of cutaneous (skin) and two cases of pulmonary anthrax, contamination of postal facilities, and significant public concern. The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS), Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health (PEOSH) Program participated in the efforts of the NJDHSS to protect postal employees and the public during this serious public health emergency. Below is a description of activities that the PEOSH Program participated in.

PEOSH staff helped to develop several guidelines including:

- Sample Collection and Building Evacuation, Decontamination and Reentry Guidelines for Suspect Anthrax Incidents. This bulletin provided guidance to law enforcement, public health emergency responders and decision makers regarding the

handling of suspicious packages or materials thought to be associated with an act of biological terrorism related to anthrax.

- Interim Guidelines for Minimizing the Risk from Cutaneous and Inhalation Anthrax While Handling Mail. These guidelines provide recommendations to workers involved in sorting, distributing and handling mail in state, county, and local public facilities.
- Guidelines for Employees Potentially Exposed to *Bacillus anthracis*. These guidelines apply to all NJDHSS personnel who are potentially exposed to anthrax (*Bacillus anthracis*) during environmental evaluations of suspected anthrax contaminated sites or during laboratory work involving suspected anthrax samples.

PEOSH staff assisted in environmental evaluations including:

- Developing an environmental sampling strategy for the Hamilton Postal Facility. The purpose of the environmental sampling strategy was to characterize the extent of the anthrax contamination in the facility.
- Formulating a site entry plan for the Hamilton Postal Facility, the West Trenton Postal Facility, the Princeton Postal Facility, and the Bellmawr Postal Facility. The site entries were conducted in level B protection with full decontamination. The purpose of

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Commissioner



James E. McGreevey
Governor



Albert G. Kroll
Commissioner

New and Revised PEOSH Publications

- **Bloodborne Pathogens Standard Model Exposure Control Plan and Employer Guide**
- **OSHA Revises the Bloodborne Pathogens Standard Alert**
- **Bloodborne Pathogens Standard Frequently Asked Questions**
- **PEOSH Revised Bloodborne Pathogens Standard 29 CFR 1910.1030**
- **Outdoor Work Health Hazards**
- **Smallpox Information Bulletin**

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these entries was to take samples and characterize the contamination in the building. PEOSH personnel functioned as site safety officers for these entries.

- Conducting environmental surface sampling in postal facilities serviced by the Hamilton Postal Facility. Ten teams of two individuals each collected 896 samples from 49 postal facilities. Sampling was conducted at these postal facilities because the Hamilton Postal Facility was contaminated with anthrax and there was concern that these other postal facilities could have been a primary source or secondarily cross-contaminated.
- Assisting in the decontamination of the Hamilton Postal Facility by attending meetings with representatives of the US Postal Service, IT Corporation, US EPA, and CDC NIOSH. The main purpose of these meetings was to discuss issues relating to the decontamination of the Hamilton Postal Facility.
- Assisting in coordinating a validation study conducted by the IT Corporation and the NJDHSS Laboratory. The study attempted to assess the usefulness of a field instrument to rapidly identify the anthrax contamination.
- Conducting inspections of a high volume state government mail sorting facility and making recommendations for engineering controls, work practice modifications, and personal protective equipment to minimize potential exposure to anthrax spores by employees. Staff attended meetings with manufacturers of mail sorting machinery to provide input on retrofit engineering controls to existing equipment.

Other PEOSH activities included:

- Participated on a Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force Subcommittee-Capitol Post Office Task Force. The purpose of the Capitol Post Office Task Force was to evaluate the feasibility of implementing work practices and new technologies to address the safety and

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Hamilton Township Responds to September 11, 2001

**By Walter H. Bronek, Jr.
Chief of Emergency Response
Township of Hamilton, Mercer County,
New Jersey**

No one will ever forget September 11, 2001 the day our country was subjected to multiple acts of terrorism, nor will Hamilton Township's - Office of Emergency Management which deployed essential emergency management personnel into action. Under the direction of the Director of Emergency Management, Captain William McDougall, emergency contingency pre-plans were placed into effect.

Personnel representing Police, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Departments and the Hazardous Materials Response Team prepared for immediate response and emergency preparedness for the days to follow. Essential communications were in place with the Mercer County Office of Emergency Management and New Jersey State Office of Emergency Management. While community after community was offering their services to the victims of the World Trade Center, our efforts were being directed towards preparing Hamilton against potential acts of terrorism.

Approximately one and one-half hours after the attack on the World Trade Center and U.S. Pentagon, the Mercer County Office of Emergency Management received a crucial call.

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security of incoming mail throughout State Government. The Capitol Post Office Task Force made recommendations to the Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force.

- Answered phone calls at the New Jersey State Police Emergency Operations Center to address bioterrorism concerns from members of the health community and public.
- Assisted at local hospitals that were providing anthrax screening for postal workers potentially exposed to anthrax.
- Assisted in contacting postal workers to see if they had seen their physician and if their physician had prescribed antibiotics.

World Trade Center

Staff from the PEOSH Program volunteered to assist the New York State Public Employees Safety and Health (PESH) Program, the New York City Department of Health and Region II OSHA at the World Trade Center recovery site in New York City. Staff were assigned to assist at several locations, including the Staten Island Fresh Kills Landfill, the Frozen Zone perimeter and Ground Zero. Staff assisted by providing the following services:

- assembling respirators
- fit test checking of respirators
- seal checking respirators
- selecting proper respiratory protection
- decontaminating respirators
- assembling hard hats, flashlights and other equipment
- distributing personal protective equipment including:
 - helmets
 - gloves
 - boots

- goggles
- safety glasses
- hearing protection
- first aid supplies
- saline solutions
- other assorted personal protective equipment

PEOSH staff assisted Federal OSHA by walking around ground zero and suggesting safety and health precautions to be taken by emergency and construction workers on site.

PEOSH staff were also responsible for coordinating the NJDHSS Occupational Health Service efforts with outside agencies such as New York PESH, the New York City Department of Health and Region II OSHA. Eight PEOSH staff worked a total of 20 days and 251 hours at the site.

PEOSH Training and Publications Catalog

- Lists occupational safety and health training programs and publications
- Free training conducted at your workplace
- Customized to fit your needs
- Call (609) 984-1863 to schedule occupational health training
- Call (609) 633-2587 to schedule safety training

Hamilton Township Responds to September 11, 2001
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A request by Monmouth County Emergency Operations Center was made seeking assistance of the Hamilton Township Hazardous Materials Response Team. Our experienced personnel and emergency response vehicle were vitally needed to provide support services to the U.S. Military Facility at Fort Monmouth. Without hesitation our response personnel assembled for departure. Under the direction of Walter H. Bronek, Jr., Chief of Emergency Response, team members were briefed. Each of the members who volunteered clearly understood the situation and shared the nervousness we were all experiencing. However, they never hesitated to help others in need.

Within hours of arrival at Fort Monmouth our emergency response team was requested to relocate to a major NJ Transit Transportation Facility located in South Amboy, New Jersey. Our team of hazmat professionals was assigned to the task of decontaminating passengers and victims exiting from New York City to New Jersey. The process lasted for hours encompassing about 100 civilians.

Take Advantage of PEOSH Consultation Services

By Eric Beckhusen, Acting Program Manager

Would your workplace “pass” a PEOSH inspection?

There is now a way you can get assistance to be in compliance with PEOSH Standards and get expert advice through the recently established New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, PEOSH Program, Consultation Project.

The purpose of the Consultation Project is to help public employers (for example, municipalities) provide a safe and healthful work environment that is free from recognized hazards. The Consultation Project serves as a source of information and technical assistance for employers, and helps them identify, evaluate, and prevent hazardous workplace conditions and work practices that may cause injury and illness in their workplace.

Benefits

Free: PEOSH consultation services are free of charge to public employers. The Consultation Project will provide expert advice that will help in establishing a safe and healthful workplace.

No Penalty: No citations are issued for violations identified during a consultation and no penalties are ever proposed.

Confidential: PEOSH consultation is a confidential service that is separate from PEOSH enforcement operations. The employer’s request for a consultation will not trigger an enforcement inspection. The employer’s name or any information about the workplace will not be provided to PEOSH enforcement operations as long as the employer corrects any serious hazard or imminent danger situation in a timely manner. If the employer fails or refuses to eliminate or control a serious hazard or imminent danger in the agreed upon timeframes, PEOSH enforcement staff will be notified. In Federal OSHA’s experience, such instances are rare.

Full Service Consultation: A full range of consultation services is available. PEOSH encourages employers to request full service consultation. Full service consultation covers all occupational health concerns and includes assistance in establishing effective workplace safety and health programs. The emphasis is on preventing worker injury and illness. Employer assistance may also include training and education for management, supervisors and employees. Limited service consultation is also available. The employer has the option of limiting the consultation visit to a specific workplace concern.

Other Benefits: Increased understanding of workplace hazards and remedies will enable employers to protect employees from injury and illness.

Employers will be better able to comply with PEOSH standards.

An effective safety and health program can improve morale and increase productivity.

In addition to direct savings from lowered injury and illness rates, there are savings from decreased workers’ compensation costs, fewer product losses and reductions in lost work time. Effective workplace safety and health management is good business because the cost of injuries and illnesses can far exceed the cost of prevention.

Consultation Process

Requesting Assistance: Consultation requests can be made by telephone, fax, e-mail, and letter. Requests will be prioritized according to the severity of the hazard in the workplace. More hazardous workplaces will receive a higher priority. The PEOSH consultant may encourage the employer to include an evaluation of all working conditions and the workplace safety and health program as part of the consultation process. The employer may limit the scope of the consultation visit. However, during the visit, if the consultant observes hazards that are outside the scope of the request, the consultant must inform the employer, and the employer must correct any serious hazard or imminent danger to employees.

Opening Conference: Upon arriving at the workplace for a scheduled visit, the consultant will briefly review the ground rules of the visit, including the employer’s obligation to:

- protect employees if serious hazardous conditions are identified;
- allow the highest ranking union official the opportunity to participate fully in the visit; and,
- allow the consultant to privately interview individual employees or speak to employees at their workstations.

The consultant will also review the employer’s rights including:

- the right to terminate participation at any time;
- the fact that consultation is a confidential service; therefore, PEOSH enforcement staff do not have rights to workplace information from a consultation visit; and,

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*Take Advantage of PEOSH Consultation Service
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- the right to disagree with correction schedules.

If a written safety and health program exists, the consultant will review the program and any other related written policies.

Survey: During the site visit both employer and employee representatives have the right to participate. During the survey the consultant will:

- help the employer identify hazards in the workplace;
- suggest approaches or options for solving a safety and health problem.

Closing Conference: The PEOSH consultant will review in detail the findings observed during the survey at the closing conference. The practices that need to be improved and the practices that are acceptable will be identified. Problems, possible solutions and an abatement period to eliminate or control any serious hazards identified during the walk-through will be discussed. In rare instances, the consultant may find an “imminent danger” situation during the survey. If so, immediate action to protect all employees must be taken. The employer and the consultant are required to develop and agree to a reasonable plan to eliminate or control hazards that would be judged a “serious violation.” The PEOSH consultant will offer general approaches and options to correct the hazard, as well as other sources of technical help.

Correction and Follow Through: Following the closing conference, the PEOSH consultant will send a detailed written report within two weeks explaining the findings and confirming the correction periods agreed upon. The employer must agree to post the List of Hazards identified by the Consultation Project. The List of Hazards must be posted for three days or until the serious hazards are corrected, whichever is the longer period of time. The PEOSH consultant may be in contact from time to time to check on the progress of the abatement. The employer may contact the PEOSH consultant for assistance.

The NJDHSS PEOSH Program requires hazard correction so that each consultation visit achieves its objective of effective employee protection. If serious hazards (or an imminent danger) are not eliminated or controlled according to the plan and within the time limits agreed upon (or an agreed-upon extension), the situation will be referred from the Consultation Project to the PEOSH Enforcement Project for appropriate action.

For More Information

If you have an occupational health or compliance question call the PEOSH Program at (609) 984-1863. There is someone available every work day to answer your occupational health questions. If you have a question about occupational safety call the New Jersey Department of Labor, Office of Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health at (609) 633-3869.

For additional information or to arrange an occupational health consultation, call the PEOSH Program Consultation Project at (609) 984-1863 or visit our web site at www.state.nj.us/health/eoh/peoshweb.

PEOSH Targets Municipal Departments of Public Works

By Keith J. Bobrowski, MPH, IHIT

In January 2002, the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS)-Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health (PEOSH) Program, Enforcement Project began an enforcement initiative targeting Municipal Public Works Departments (DPWs) throughout the state. This initiative is being conducted concurrently with the New Jersey Department of Labor-Office of Public Employees Safety which is responsible for safety-related regulations.

The decision to target DPWs was made based on previous experience at DPWs and the high level of risk posed by activities conducted by these departments. Typical DPWs are responsible for the maintenance, repair, and operations of local township services. Tasks conducted by these departments commonly include grounds maintenance, tree trimming and removal, road and sidewalk repair, curbside pickup and removal, vehicle maintenance, building maintenance and emergency response operations support.

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*PEOSH Targets Municipal Departments of Public Works
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Responsibility	Associated Activities	Common Health Hazards
Grounds Maintenance	Use of lawn mowers, weed wackers, leaf blowers	Noise, heat stress, UV radiation, flying particles, biohazards, injuries
Tree Trimming and Removal	Use of chain saws, pole saws, chippers	Noise, heat stress, UV radiation, flying particles, biohazards, falls, injuries
Road and Sidewalk Repair	Use of jackhammers, concrete saws, heavy equipment	Noise, particulate exposure, silica exposure, vibration/ergonomic hazards
Curbside Pickup and Removal	Garbage pickup, use of leaf vacuums, and heavy equipment	Ergonomics, noise, unknown hazards
Vehicle Maintenance	Routine vehicle maintenance activities, welding	Exposure to chemical solvents, welding fumes, corrosives, UV radiation, noise, vehicle exhaust
Building Maintenance	Renovation activities, carpentry, demolition	Ergonomics, noise, asbestos
Emergency Response Operations Support	Mobilization of equipment and materials, general support	Chemical hazards, unknown hazards

After beginning the project, it quickly became apparent how critical the need was for such an enforcement initiative. Despite the numerous and potentially serious hazards that this population is exposed to, nearly all municipalities inspected did not have basic employee health and safety programs in place.

As of December 31, 2002, the PEOSH Program has conducted 56 programmed inspections at DPWs throughout the state and issued 111 citations. Violations issued were similar at each DPW inspected.

*PEOSH Targets Municipal Departments of Public Works
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Summary of Citations Issued			
Regulation	Citations	Non-Complicant Case	Application
Failure to prepare a Workplace Hazard Assessment for Selection of Personal Protective Equipment	29 CFR 1910.132(d)2	34 (77%)	All employees
Failure to provide Hazardous Operations and Emergency Response Awareness Training	29 CFR 1910.120(q)(1) 29 CFR 1910.120(q)(6)(i)	8 (18%) 28 (64%)	Employees who are likely to be involved in initial identification and assessment of potential hazardous materials release
Failure to provide training on personal protective equipment issued	29 CFR 1910.132(f)	22 (50%)	All employees
Failure to conduct an asbestos building inspection, label asbestos, notify contractors, and provide asbestos awareness training to affected employees	29 CFR 1910.1001(j)(2)(ii)	17 (39%)	Department-wide
Failure to establish and implement a formal respiratory protection program	29 CFR 1910.134(c)(1) 29 CFR 1910.134(f)(1)	9 (20%) 1 (2%)	All employees issued or voluntarily wearing respiratory protection
Failure to provide an effective pest control program (rodent or bird infestation in building)	29 CFR 1910.141(a)(5)	5 (11%)	Department-wide
Failure to provide an adequate eyewash station	29 CFR 1910.151(c)	7 (16%)	All employees exposed to corrosive chemicals
Failure to implement a formal hearing conservation program	29 CFR 1910.95(c)(1)*	5 (11%)	All employees exposed to noise
Failure to control microbial contamination in building	N.J.A.C. 12:100-13.4(c)	2 (5%)	Department-wide
*Note - Full shift noise dosimeter sampling is required to issue a citation of the occupational noise standard. Due to the high variability of day to day operations, documentation was not accomplished in all cases; however, PEOSH recommended that all DPWs institute a formal hearing conservation program based on the types of equipment and machinery used by employees.			

Compliance with occupational health standards not only serves to protect employees health, is ethically responsible, and is a regulatory requirement, but it also makes good financial sense for a municipality by limiting potential liability associated with compensable worker sickness and injury claims. Compliance also serves to document employee exposures. For example, if a municipality has a basic hearing conservation program in place, which includes annual audiograms, periodic noise exposure surveys, and the proper selection of hearing protection, they will have a much better defense if an employee sues 20 years from now claiming an occupational hearing loss. It has been well established that the

minimal cost associated with establishing and implementing effective occupational health and safety programs pales in comparison with the costs associated with lost work time, long-term disability, and litigation defense.

The goal of this targeted project is to assure a safe and healthful work environment that is free from recognized hazards. By presenting this preliminary information, it is our hope that municipalities will voluntarily comply with these regulations prior to a PEOSH inspection. All of the above-cited regulations can be found either at the PEOSH website (www.state.nj.us/health/eoh/peoshweb), OSHA website (www.osha.gov), or by

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*PEOSH Targets Municipal Departments of Public Works
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requesting the regulation from our office at (609) 984-1863. Information bulletins, guidelines, and model programs are also available to assist with compliance. In addition, the PEOSH Consultation Project and the PEOSH Education and Training Project are available to municipalities for compliance assistance and training.

Regulatory compliance is only the first step in preventing occupational illnesses and injuries. To be effective, these programs also have to be incorporated into the culture of the municipalities. It is the responsibility of the employer to put the program in place and enforce its use as a basic job duty. It is the employees' responsibility to perform their jobs according to the program. For free assistance with developing or enhancing occupational safety and health programs contact the PEOSH Consultation Project at (609) 984-1863.

Free On-Site Safety and Health and Training

By Raja Iglewicz, CIH

The New Jersey Department of Labor and the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services's PEOSH on-site Consultation and Education/Training Projects help public employers provide a safe and healthy work environment for their employees. The Education/Training Project can help by providing free on-site occupational safety and health training. The staff will customize the programs to fit the needs of the workplace.

As new occupational safety and health standards are adopted, seminars are developed and presented to public employers and employees to help them better understand and implement the requirements of these standards. Popular courses include: asbestos awareness, bloodborne pathogens, personal protective equipment, indoor air quality, hearing conservation, respiratory protection and public works hazards. Our staff can develop additional educational seminars in response to specific requests. Employers and employees can arrange to have these presentations provided at the workplace free of charge.

To schedule safety consultation or training call

(609) 633-2587

www.state.nj.us/labor/lse/lspeosh.html

To schedule occupational health consultation or training call

(609) 984-1863

www.state.nj.us/health/eoh/peoshweb

For a list of free courses and publications that are available, ask for the

PEOSH Training and Publications Catalog

The PEOSH Training and Publications Catalog, information on PEOSH consultation, and a consultation request form are available on the DHSS PEOSH web site.

Visit us on the web at:

www.state.nj.us/health/eoh/peoshweb





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For Health Issues:

The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services investigates complaints regarding *health* hazards in the workplace.

To obtain more information call:
(609) 984-1863

For Safety Issues:

The New Jersey Department of Labor (DOL) investigates complaints regarding *safety* hazards in the workplace. In addition, DOL is responsible for administering and enforcing the New Jersey PEOSH Act throughout the state.

To obtain more information call:
(609) 292-7036

*This document was prepared by the NJDHSS
PEOSH Program*

**PEOSH PROGRAM
READER RESPONSE CARD**

PEOSH NEWS 2003

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Please take a few minutes to help us evaluate this publication. Please check the following:

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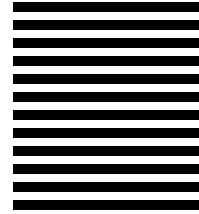
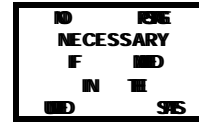
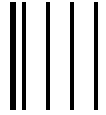
Which section did you find most useful?

The least useful and why?

Other occupational health topics you would like to see the PEOSH Program develop an information bulletin on.

Other comments and suggestions.

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